

File: REH1-019

Introductory notes

- These examples come from an elicitation session with Betsy Shem.
- **My overall goal** for these elicitations was to see what happens in sentences without verbs, specifically sentences involving possession. I'm interested in marking for animacy, number, and obviation on demonstratives, nouns, and pronouns.
 - For this session, I focused on an **inanimate noun** <muuhkumaan> 'knife'
 - **Time stamps** next to examples indicate where Betsy's pronunciation can be found in audio file REH1-019. Betsy's pronunciations are really clear.
 - **Transcriptions** are in the Northern East Cree roman orthography style found on eastcree.org
- Betsy and I worked our way through a series of pictures that I created using clip art. I showed her a picture and asked her how to say things related to that picture. The pictures are included at the bottom of these notes.

Picture 1: An image of one knife

Chaawkaan uu

What is this?

- Difference between an animate noun like 'fish' and inanimate 'knife' → Can I say <awaan uu> to ask which type of knife it is? No, "awaan uu is a person or animal"

Muuhkumaan uu

'This is a knife' (00:17)

- Clear stress on the first syllable of <**muuh**kumaan> because there's no final -h
- Phonetic note: Betsy's pronunciations of 'knife' here and elsewhere are really clear, so the /h/ often shows up clearly within the word. I don't think it's always an [h] necessarily, because sometimes it seems more pharyngeal than glottal. This could be a good topic for learners too.

Maa muuhkumaan

- Means more like 'Here, a knife' or 'Here, this knife'—those are my interpretations. I missed writing down how Betsy described it.
- Used if you're handing a knife to someone

Picture 2: An image of one hiker next to one knife

Awaan uyaa

'Whose is this?' (00:24)

- I'm not sure I hear an /h/ at the end of uyaa, but this is a very clear pronunciation that can be compared to <Awaan uyaah>

Awaan uyaayiu

'Whose is this?' (00:28)

- Betsy says it “means the same” with this demonstrative variation.
- I definitely don’t hear an /h/ at the end of <uyaayiu>, and again, Betsy’s pronunciation is so clear it can be compared easily to <Awaan uyaayih>

Awaan uyaa umuuhkumaan

‘Whose knife is this?’ (00:36)

- I hear stress on the second syllable of ‘his knife’ <umuuhkumaan>
- I hear no /h/ on the demonstrative or the noun.

*Awaan uyaa muuhkumaan

- Not good because there’s a mismatch in obviation: the demonstrative <uyaa> has an obviative form, but the noun <muuhkumaan> is proximate.

Awaan muuhkumaan uyaa

- Betsy offered this structure by saying “or you could say <Awaan umuuhkumaan uyaa>” (00:47), but I didn’t ask for a translation to compare to <Awaan uyaa umuuhkumaan>
- Compared to the next one, I think this might mean ‘Whose knife is this?’

Awaan umuuhkumaan uyaayiu

‘Whose knife is this?’ (00:51)

- I definitely hear no /h/ at the end of this <uyaayiu>. Clear stress on <umuuhkumaan>

Wiiyi uyaayiu umuuhkumaan

‘This is his knife’ (01:04)

- Again, I hear no final /h/ anywhere but Betsy’s pronunciation is so clear that this form can be analyzed acoustically really easily.

Wiiyi uyaa umuuhkumaan

‘This is his knife’

- Betsy said this version when I asked her to repeat the previous example. I wasn’t recording when she said it.
- So she used the other form of the demonstrative and didn’t seem to notice the difference at all. I think there really is no difference, and maybe <uyaa> is just a short form of <uyaayiu>, and speakers may not even notice the difference.

Maan naapaau umuuhkumaan

‘This is that man’s knife’ (01:20)

- Betsy used the Set 2 demonstrative form <maan> instead of <an> here, and it emphasizes the ‘that man’
- Betsy pronounces the vowel in her Set Two demonstratives a bit differently from what’s in other sources For example, her <maan> is more like [mɔn] or [mɒn], whereas the eascree.org version is closer to [mɛn]. In fact, Betsy spells <maan> as <maun>

An naapaau umuuhkumaan
'that man's knife' (01:27)

- This is the noun phrase with a demonstrative 'that' specifying the possessor 'man'

Maan naapaau umuuhkumaan uyaayiu
'That man there, this is his knife' (01:36)

- Betsy says this form is OK but used in the context of "if you want to specify which knife", as if there are a bunch of knives and one from that bunch specifically belongs to that man there.

Maan naapaau umuuhkumaan
'That man there's knife'

An naapaau umuuhkumaan uyaa

- Is OK too. Seems to mean more like 'that man's knife is this one' (01:45)
- Could also mean 'this one is that guy's knife'
- The other variant form <uyaayiu> would work too, without changing the meaning

Picture 3: An image of two hikers next to a knife

umuuhkumaaniwaau
'their knife'

- Just the noun phrase here.
- The plural possessor is indicated by <iwaau>

Wiiyiwau uyaa umuuhkumaaniwaau
'This is their knife' (01:55)

anichii naapaauch umuuhkumaaniwaau
'those men's knife' (02:10)

- The English translation is awkward, but Betsy says it feels natural to say in Cree and that this structure OK

Anichii naapaauch umuuhkumaaniwaau uyaayiu
'those men, this is their knife'

Maanichii napaauch umuuhkumaaniwaau
'It's those men's (there) knife' (02:23)

- Here again is an emphatic Set Two demonstrative with 'men'.
- Betsy says this kind of structure is good and may be said in response to something like:
- 'That's my knife' → No, 'it's those men there's knife', emphasizing who the knife belongs to

Picture 4: An image of three knives

Chaakwaanihii uhii
'What are these?' (02:40)

Muuhkumaanh uhii
'These are knives' (02:49)

Picture 5: An image of one hiker next to a cluster of three knives

Awaan uyaayiu
'Whose are these?' (03:10)

- There's an -h on the demonstrative because it's referring to more than one knife

Awaan uyaayiu umuuhkumaanh
Awaan uyaah umuuhkumaanh
'Whose are these knives?' (03:28)

- Here Betsy was looking at the two different spellings above. I asked her to pronounce each version twice, but she actually just said the first version four times. I think this is really because there might not be a difference to a speaker between <uyaayiu> and <uyaah>. They may just be the same word to a speaker, and so the spelling does not even affect perception of the words.

Wiiyi uyaayiu umuuhkumaanh
'These are his knives' (03:49)

- Seems it can also mean 'his knives', which is a similar but structurally different translation.
- This may be because <uyaayiu umuuhkumaanh> '(these) his knives (OBV) ...' is an obviative noun phrase and feels to a speaker like it's incomplete. In fact Betsy said you could say <uyaayiu umuuhkumaanh> but that you need to "say more" after it.
- She offered up the following example: <Uyaayiu umuuhkumaanh nimui nashch kaashaayiu> 'his knives here are not very sharp' (03:58)

Comparison of plural vs. singular phrases with obviation (04:11):

- 1) Umuuhkumaanh uyaayiu
'these are his knives'
- 2) Umuuhkumaan uyaayiu
'this is his knife'

There's a clear pitch shift between these two versions: The plural <Umuuhkumaanh uyaayiu> has final stress on both words, and the singular version <Umuuhkumaan uyaayiu> has non-final stress for both words.

Wiiyi uyaayih

'These are his' (04:43)

- Here there is no noun as the possessee, so the demonstrative indicates the possessee (knives). Clear final stress on <uyaayih>

Maan naapaau umuuhkumaanh

'These are that man's knives' (04:50)

an naapaau umuuhkumaanh

'that man's knives' (04:58)

Picture 6: An image of two hikers next to a cluster of three knives

Wiiyiwaau umuuhkumaaniwaauh

'their knives' (05:07)

- Here the plural possessor is indicated by the plural pronoun <wiiyiwaau> as well as with the plural possessor marking –waau on 'knives'

Wiiyiwaau uyaah umuuhkumaaniwaauh

'These are their knives' (05:17)

Maanichii napaauch uyaah umuuhkumaaniwaauh

'Those (there) are those men's knives' (05:26)

- Betsy actually said this two different ways without noticing: The first with <uyaah> and the second with <uyaayih> (05:26). Again, I think this indicates that speakers may not even be aware of the difference between the two forms.

Uchii napaauch umuuhkumaaniwaauh

'These are those men's knives' (05:44)

Anichii napaauch umuuhkumaaniwaauh

'Those men's knives' (05:58)

Anichii napaauch umuuhkumaaniwaauh uyaah

'those men's knives are these' (06:13)

- Might be used in a situation like pointing out which knives belong to these men











